

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT IC

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION: FORMAL INAUGURATION OF TWO
NEW ANTI-IDF PARTIES

REF: REYKJAVIK 0699

1. POSITION OF NEW ANTI-IDF LEFT-WING POLITICAL PARTY (REF-
TEL) BECAME FORMALIZED WITH ANNOUNCEMENT THAT CHAIRMAN IS MAGNUS
TORFI OLAFSSON, MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SOCIAL AFFAIRS
AND COMMUNICATIONS, AND VICE CHAIRMAN IS OLAFUR RAGNAR GRIMSSON.
OLAFSSON IS OLL MINISTER WHO REFUSED TO BREAK WITH GOVT WHEN
REST OF HIS ALTHING OLL COLLEAGUES LEFT COALITION. GRIMSSON
IS LEADER OF DISSIDENT YOUNG PROGRESSIVES. OLAFSSON WHO IN
PAST SEVERAL MONTHS HAS BEEN MOVING TOWARD A PRO-IDF STANCE
THUS REVERSES HIMSELF AND PUBLICLY ALIGNS HIMSELF WITH GROUP
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WHOSE MAIN REASON FOR EXISTENCE IS TO OPPOSE PRESENCE OF U.S.

FORCES IN ICELAND. MAJORITY OF OLL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HAS SIDED WITH OLAFSSON AND AGAINST HANNIBAL VALDIMARSSON AND BJORN JONSSON. NAME NOT YET CHOSEN FOR NEW PARTY. PARENT PROGRESSIVE PARTY OF THE YOUNG PROGRESSIVES FORMALLY EXPELLED DISSIDENTS WITH PARTY SECRETARY ISSUING STATEMENT SAYING THEY COULD NO LONGER CLAIM ANY CONNECTION WITH PP SINCE THEY HAD "PUBLICLY REJECTED PARTY LEADERSHIP AND PARTY PLATFORM."

2. DISAPPOINTMENT OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEADERS WHO HAD WORKED FOR MERGER OF SDP AND OLL WAS OBVIOUS. SDP NEWSPAPER ALTHYDUBLADID SAID FORMATION OF NEW PARTY "IS A BACKWARD STEP WHICH CAN ONLY CAUSE FURTHER DISINTEGRATION OF THE LEFTIST MOVEMENT." WHILE THIS STEP MEANS ABANDONMENT OF PLANNED SDP-OLL MERGER, "SOCIAL DEMOCRATS WILL STILL BE WILLING TO COOPERATE WITH THOSE WHO SEEK THE COMMON GOALS OF THE WORKERS," (PRESUMABLY MEANING HANNIBAL VALDIMARSSON AND BJORN JONSSON). GYLFI GISLASON, SDP CHAIRMAN, SAID IT NOW SEEMS CLEAR SDP WILL HAVE TO FIGHT ELECTION CAMPAIGN ALONE. VALDIMARSSON APPEARED TO BE WHISTLING IN THE DARK BY SAYING HE HAD BEEN FAVORABLY INCLINED TOWARDS COOPERATION WITH SDP AND STILL DID NOT SEE ANY OBSTACLE TO COMMON ELECTION LISTS BY THE TWO PARTIES. MAGNUS TORFI OLAFSSON WAS MORE STRAIGHT-FORWARD: "I NEVER LIKED THE IDEA OF BREAKING WITH THE GOVERNMENT IN ORDER TO COOPERATE WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. IF OUR NEW PARTY IS TO BE A LEFTIST ONE, IT CANNOT BEGIN LIFE BY LOOKING TOWARD A FUTURE WORKING ARRANGEMENT WITH THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY."

3. AS A RESULT OF FORMAL SPLIT, PRESSURES ARE BUILDING UP WITHIN PP TO PERSUADE PRIMIN OLAFUR JOHANNESSEN TO MODERATE PARTY POLICY ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE. AT SAME TIME THE SUDDEN FORMATION OF SPLINTER LEFTIST-ORIENTED GROUPS IS MAKING PRIMIN WONDER WHETHER FUTURE OF HIS PARTY IS WITH THE LEFT OR THE RIGHT. RIGHTIST ELEMENTS ARE TRYING TO TELL HIM IT IS IMPORTANT HE NOT ALLOW COMMUNIST-DOMINATED PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE TO EMBRACE PP IN CAMPAIGN. THEIR THINKING IS THAT WAY MUST BE LEFT OPEN FOR POSSIBLE POST-ELECTION DEAL WITH INDEPENDENCE PARTY AND SUCH DEAL WOULD BE FORECLOSED BY PRESENT PP STAND ON DEFENSE.

4. THERE STILL SEEMS TO REMAIN CONSIDERABLE RESPECT FOR PRIMIN IN PP BUT FONMIN AGUSTSSON APPEARS TO BE IN INCREASING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TROUBLE. PP COMMITTEE IN SOUTH CONSTITUENCY YESTERDAY REFUSED HIM A PLACE ON ITS LIST. HE WILL HAVE PROBLEM IN FINDING SEAT FOR WHICH TO RUN SINCE NEITHER THE LEFT NOR RIGHT WINGS OF HIS PARTY RESPECT HIM..

5. ALSO THIS WEEK THE ANTI-IDF ELEMENTS OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS BROKE AWAY FROM THE SDP AND, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF NJORDUR NJARDVIK, HAVE DECLARED THEY WILL COOPERATE WITH

THE NEW OLL-YOUNG PP GROUP IN ITS ANTI-IDF PLATFORM.

COMMENT: DURING THE PAST WEEK ABOUT 4 OR 5 NEW POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE APPEARED, ALL LEFTIST-ORIENTED. IT IS EXPECTED THAT BEFORE SERIOUS CAMPAIGNING GETS UNDERWAY FOR THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS SOME WILL DISAPPEAR AND THROW THEIR VOTES TO EITHER THE NEW OLL-YPP OR THE PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE. THE CONCERN AMONG PRO-IDF ELEMENTS IS WHAT EFFECT ALL OF THIS WILL HAVE ON THE PP, PARTICULARLY WHETHER THEY WILL TURN LEFT AGAIN, THUS ISOLATING THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY AND WHAT REMAINS OF THE SDP AS THE ONLY PRO-IDF PARTIES, OR WHETHER THEY WILL TURN TO THE RIGHT, THUS ENSURING A PRO-IDF MAJORITY.

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